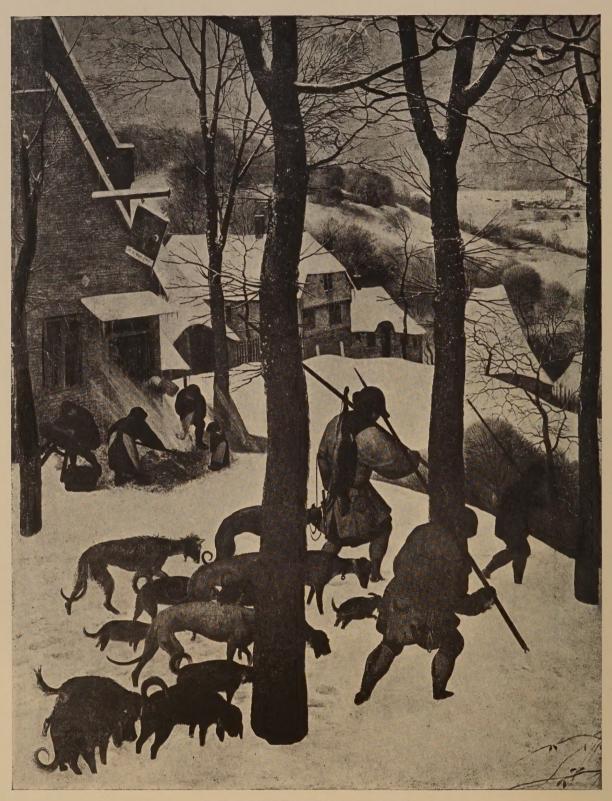




l. J. Muhr



## PIETER BRUEGEL THE ELDER: A STUDY OF HIS PAINTINGS



HUNTERS IN THE SNOW (DETAIL)

# PIETER BRUEGEL THE ELDER

A STUDY OF HIS PAINTINGS

BY

VIRGIL BARKER

NEW YORK

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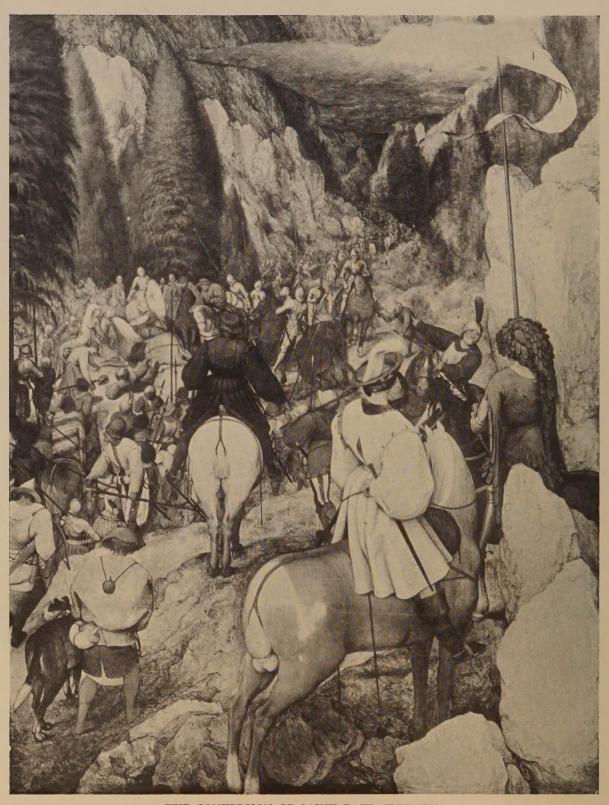
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#### NOTE

OST of the material included in this book was originally published in a special Bruegel edition of The Arts. Mr. Barker's essay met with such immediate success that in order to meet the demand the editor decided to increase the number of illustrations and publish Mr. Barker's noteworthy essay in permanent form.

Comparatively little has been written in English on Pieter Bruegel the Elder, nothing in fact except a few passing magazine articles. At the request of the artists The Arts undertook to supply this want. In selecting Mr. Barker to carry out this important work The Arts was particularly fortunate. Besides being an ardent student of the genius of Bruegel, the author, in the course of his duties as European correspondent of The Arts, was able to carry on the special research necessary to give permanent value to the following essay.

FORBES WATSON.



THE CONVERSION OF SAINT PAUL (DETAIL)

### PIETER BRUEGEL THE ELDER

#### A STUDY OF HIS PAINTINGS

SIDE from the evidence of the signed and frequently dated prints, drawings and paintings, few things are certainly known about the life and personality of Pieter Bruegel the Elder. Almost all of these, such as they are, occur in a brief passage concerning him, written about thirty years after his death, in "The Book of the Painters" by Carel Van Mander. Herein is no mention of the date of Bruegel's birth: even the place of it, despite a seeming definiteness, remains in some obscurity. His biographer says that the painter was born "not far from Breda, in a village called Breughel,\* by which name he called himself and left it to his descendants." The village of that name nearest to Breda is twenty-five miles away; and as distances went in the sixteenth century, this seems hardly to be bridged by Van Mander's easy phrase. As for the year, the guesses of the scholars range all the way from 1510 to 1530, the most widely accepted one being 1525. Any closer determination of it is a matter of comparative unimportance in its possible effect on the period of actual productiveness, since this is very satisfactorily covered by trustworthy dates.

And whatever the exact year may have been, it had not been long before when for Europeans the geographical world had been suddenly enlarged as a sort of materialization of the immediately preceding enlargement of mind. The succession of discoveries—of America; of India and the true Indies; of Sumatra, Java and Borneo; and, two hundred and fifty years after Marco Polo, of China—were only the working on another plane of the essentially exploring spirit which had been previously manifested by the scholars, scientists and artists of the Early Renaissance. National unity on a fresh basis had

During all this period of ferment and reorientation for the European mind, Antwerp, where Bruegel was to spend most of his life, was one of the most important of all ports. Situated in what was then the most densely populated region of Europe, it had in its own houses a hundred thousand persons; and of these more than a tenth were foreigners— German merchants, Italian scholars, Portuguese Jews, French Huguenots, English sailors and the soldiers of Spain. Far-journeyed vessels brought to it the spices and rich stuffs, the metal-work and strange animals of distant lands; and their seamen had tales to tell of things far off towards the expanding horizons of the world. In this comfortable and prosperous city, where the sharp demarcations between classes prevalent in other countries were blurred almost into a real democracy of the bourgeois, every fresh discovery and important event had its repercussion in the general consciousness.

Antwerp was thus a natural center of activity for the religious propaganda and disputation which formed so large and so tragic an

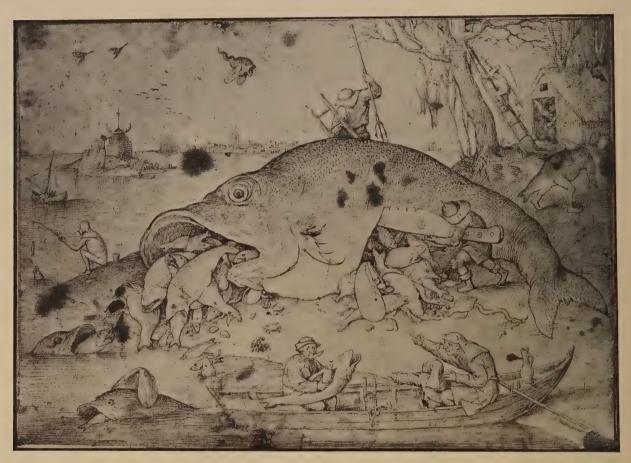
been realized in Spain through the expulsion of the Moors, and in both France and England under absolute monarchies which were headed, at the time of Bruegel's birth, by Francis I and Henry VIII. About that time, also, Magellan was circumnavigating the globe and Cortez was conquering Mexico; Leonardo and Raphael were dying, and shortly after them went Carpaccio, Leo X and Signorelli. Martin Luther, preaching the Reformation in Germany, was thus initiating a movement of ruinous significance for Bruegel's homeland; for there the cause of religious liberty, gradually coalescing with that of political independence, was to meet with the terrible repressions begun by the newly elected Emperor, Charles Quint, who was already by inheritance lord of the Low Countries.

<sup>\*</sup>There are several different ways of spelling this name, each having some degree of authority; but so far as concerns the painter himself, the deciding fact is that the signatures now visible on the paintings (about twenty in number) consistently adhere to BRVEGEL.

element in the life of the sixteenth century; creeds of all sorts readily found adherents among its varied and impressionable populace. Lutheranism was so strongly advocated by the convent of Augustinian monks that its inmates were dispersed, after the execution of two among them, and its buildings razed. Though the terrorism of the Inquis-

Even the anarchy of Anabaptism, persecuted by Catholic and Protestant alike, made headway through the martyrdom of its believers; and from 1544, almost the very year when the young Pieter Bruegel commenced his apprenticeship, the new sectarianism of Calvin entered the city and grew rapidly in strength.

While he was growing up, the English and



BIG FISH EAT LITTLE ONES (DRAWING). 1556. VIENNA, ALBERTINA

itor Van der Hulst and his priestly successors imposed silence on many, there were open preachings as well as clandestine meetings, and riots in which religion-frenzied women were among the boldest; and with all the burnings of the books, with all the imprisonments and the brandings, the full penalties of the imperial edicts could hardly be enforced by those who were conscious that such enforcement would destroy the principal source of the Emperor's precarious revenue.

the French were subduing the North American continent and in the Andes Pizarro was rifling the wealth of Peru; Rome was being pillaged by the Germans; Henry VIII was finally repudiating Catholicism and Ignatius of Loyola was in a way belatedly replying to Luther by organizing the Society of Jesuits; Hampton Court Palace, the French chateaux and the palaces of Venice were being built; Erasmus, Dürer, Machiavelli, Luini, Ariosto, Correggio died. As yet un-

conscious of such events and such personages, perhaps ignorant of the nearer deaths of Quentin Matsys and Lucas van Leyden, the youth of nameless family was living a peasant among peasants—and a genius in the making—sharing to full their laborious, roistering life. Hard drinkers and heavy eaters, they were much given to feasts and fairs; marri-

ness, he came to Antwerp and, a youth approaching his twentieth year, became an apprentice to the celebrated Pieter Coeck. Paracelsus, Copernicus and Holbein had just died; Bruegel had hardly learned to grind his colors when French Francis and English Henry followed them, even as their sometime enemy, sometime ally, Charles, was bloodily



THE LAST JUDGMENT (DRAWING). 1558. VIENNA, ALBERTINA

ages, baptisms, even deaths were for them occasions for celebrations as excessive as the labor from which they thus escaped. Their animal frankness and coarse gaiety blew like a gale of rude health over all their activities. From life itself, from the small events in a remote village of the *Campine*, Bruegel absorbed the great sane grossness which now seems buried in the books of his day. Bringing with him the peasant vitality which was to develop into a lofty philosophic humane-

but only temporarily settling religious questions at Mühlberg.

From his first master Bruegel must have received somewhat more than a merely technical training, good as that probably was. Coeck had been for four years the pupil of Bernard van Orley and had later studied in Rome; in his own work afterwards he relied to such an extent upon the formulas then worked out that all of it now seems borrowed; but the precepts that he would pass

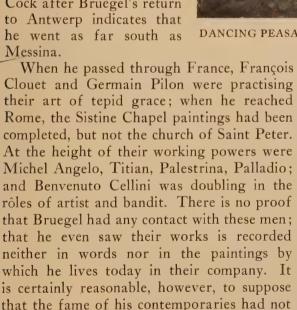
on to an apprentice could not dull or conventionalize so forceful a nature as Bruegel's. Of more significance in the development of such a nature must have been the stories of far countries that were told, adding to his knowledge and stimulating his imagination; for Coeck had spent the year of 1533 in the Constantinople of Suleiman the Magnificent and had been one of the entourage of Charles on his expedition to Tunis in 1538. Painter to the Emperor and Dean of the Guild of Saint Luke, Pieter Coeck died in 1550. Then or before Bruegel passed over to the work-shop of Jerome Cock, who was not so much a painter as a dealer in pictures and a publisher of popular prints. His establishment "was certainly the rendezvous of all the artists and all the amateurs of Antwerp and even from abroad. Rendered in engraving, the greater number of existing masterpieces would pass under the eyes of the attentive Bruegel." (Bernard: p. 58.) The very shop-name, "At the Sign of the Four Winds," symbolized the range of influences that played over him, the sights and tales that passed into his consciousness; and for Bruegel these things could be only so many more incitements to journey into the world and see it all for himself.

Therefore it is not surprising that, after he had completed his apprenticeship and been received into the painter's guild, in 1551, he should set out upon his travels. Such a trip in those days was no light undertaking. All



A VILLAGE WEDDING. PHILADELPHIA, JOHNSON COLLECTION

frontiers were insecure since the wars between Charles and Francis for continental domination; for little or nothing soldiers turned into robbers. Van Mander mentions neither routes nor places, writing only that Bruegel "went into France and from there into Italy." Even the drawings now preserved afford no positive information as to the way he went—a circumstance which might be interpreted to mean that already he was interested less in telling what a specific place looked like than in rendering the emotional effect of nature upon himself. But two designs now preserved as etchings are signed and dated at Rome in 1553, and there is a drawing of the Ripa Grande which appears to have been done on the spot. The print of a naval battle engraved by Huys and published by Cock after Bruegel's return





DANCING PEASANT. THE HAGUE, VAN VALKENBURG COLLECTION

only reached him but actually played a part in persuading him to his long wayfaring. Though still in his twenties, he even then had sufficiently a mind of his own to avoid the mistake of his predecessors, who had gone south specifically to copy and imitate the styles of the Italian painters. In their journeying they were following a fashion, doing something because others were doing it; Bruegel's urge was both deeper and broader, as his genius was.

Yes, the artistic, the professional, motive must have had much to do with sending him to Italy, but the only way of expressing the sum total of the desires that undoubtedly animated him is to say that he must have craved more life.

"For to admire an' for to see, For to be'old this world so wide"—

no motive less comprehensive than this could have moved him. He was a great artist in the making, but he was even more a man than an artist: for him the art of other men could 2.

Towards the end of 1553, not long after the deaths of Rabelais and Lucas Cranach, Bruegel was back in Antwerp. He again became affiliated with the shop of Jerome Cock, but now as a sort of collaborator, making drawings for many plates to be engraved by others and published by the shop. As a successful business man with an eye to

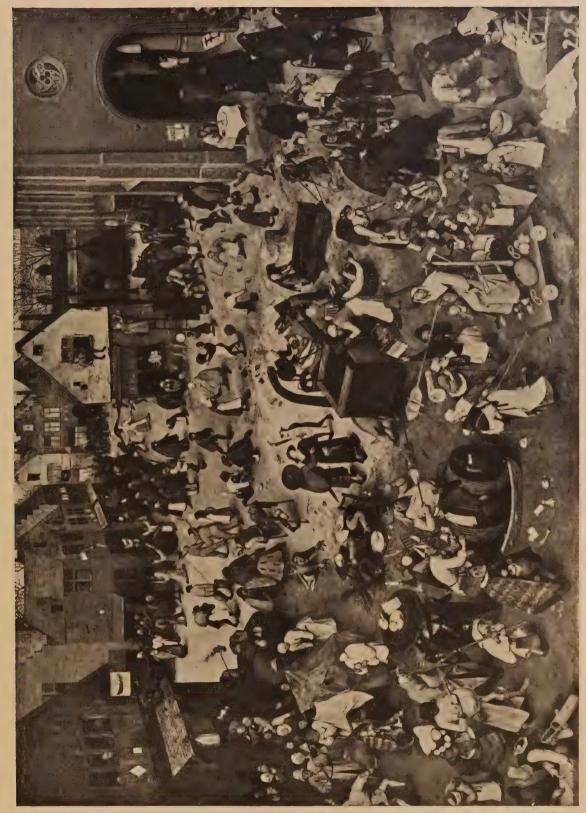


STUDY FOR A "BATTLE BETWEEN FAT AND LEAN." 1558? COPENHAGEN, ROYAL COLLECTION

be only a part, and not the most important part, of the all-inclusive experience of which he was in search. Only such a conception of his personality can account for the failure of the Italian masterpieces to influence him then or thereafter and his own immediate and lifelong preoccupation with the entire range of nature and of human life. Moreover, so much can be inferred from Van Mander's only other reference to this momentous trip, a reference which takes the form of reporting somebody else's remark that "... in the Alps he swallowed all the rocks and mountains, to return home and vomit them out on painting-board and canvas. ..."

the market, Cock's specialties were landscapes of all types and grotesqueries in the manner of Jerome Bosch, dead thirty-five years before, whose works were a mine of motives for exploitation. The former apprentice proved to be an even greater source of revenue and popularity for "The Four Winds"; he shared completely in the contemporary taste served by the shop and for several years devoted himself entirely to new and increasingly inventive compositions in each *genre*.

The pure landscapes of this period fall into two very distinct divisions—the small, intimate ones and the large, composite ones.



BATTLE BETWEEN CARNIVAL AND LENT. 1559. VIENNA, MUSEUM



BATTLE BETWEEN CARNIVAL AND LENT (DETAIL)



THE DESCENT OF CHRIST INTO LIMBO (DRAWING). 1561? VIENNA, ALBERTINA

Among the first sort those of such obviously picturesque things as ruins are less interesting, seem less realized, than those depicting the homely commonplaces characteristic of the Low Countries. An indefinite and puddled village street, a church set among trees, the hybrid ruralness where town and country meet—the buildings and small figures rendered in a clean, unwavering line and the massed multitude of leaves given without a superfluous or unmeaning scribble—these things, conveyed with such immediacy by the free and sensitive pen-work, become sharpedged and lose their bloom through the interposition of the engraver's hand. Though his return gave him to see all the littlenesses about him with the freshness of a first encounter, it did not make him forget the mountains which had struck so deeply into his mind; and he composed a whole series of

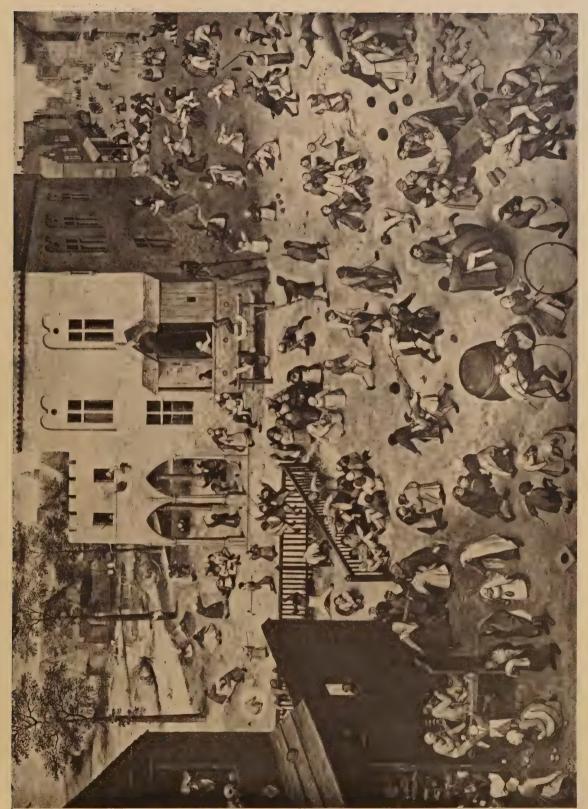
large, Latin-titled designs in which the far and low horizons of home were fabulously combined with Alpine steeps. In these plates, deeper than the romanticism of their composite character, is an immense and sober poetry which transpires even through the hardness of the engraving.

One print, dated the very year of his return, a composition of many people skating just outside a city wall, is obviously based on direct observation and is Bruegel's first essay in the realistic rendering of the life of crowds which was later to play so large a part in his painting; but yet awhile the greater part of his labor went into a long succession of drolleries and diabolisms.

It is in connection with this part, and this part only, of his life-work that there arises any necessity of discussing the influence of another painter on Bruegel. Van Mander



FLEMISH PROVERBS. 1559. BERLIN, KAISER FRIEDRICH MUSEUM



CHILDREN'S GAMES. 1560. VIENNA, MUSEUM

treats the matter thus: "He practised much in the manner of Jerome Bosch and used to make many such goblin pictures and drolleries, for which he was called by many Pieter the Droll." The biographer here recorded the general contemporary estimate which, though it is now seen to fall far short of the truth, was surely natural enough, since in his own day Bruegel was popularly known by the widely circulated prints rather than by the unreproduced paintings. The Big and Little Fish of 1556 is directly from Bosch, and that his spirit and his manner did have an influence upon Bruegel is not to be denied. But such influence as Bosch did exert upon the man who had returned from Italy uninfluenced was possible only because they shared in a racial streak which can be traced back of them into the Middle Ages. The quality that allowed Bruegel to be influenced by

Bosch at all would have manifested itself in Bruegel's art even if Bosch had never lived. Moreover, Bosch's art was limited almost to this one type of subject-matter, whereas Bruegel's art soon developed other and far more important characteristics which overshadowed without obliterating this element of grotesquerie.

For the time being, however, it had free rein in a series of Vices and numerous separate plates such as The Ass at School, The Sorcerer, The Merchant Robbed by Monkeys. In these prints there are, in addition, a mastery of design, an inventiveness of detail and a convincingness of outlandish imagination that far surpass Bosch's most ambitious efforts. A little of these qualities is to be discerned in the two drawings of The Last Judgment and Christ in Limbo; and they also display Bruegel's entire lack of any mystical



THE FALL OF THE REBEL ANGELS. 1562. BRUSSELS, MUSEUM



BATTLE BETWEEN THE ISRAELITES AND THE PHILISTINES. 1562 OR 1563. VIENNA, MUSEUM

fervor, which would have imparted some sort of impressiveness to his Christs. This negative trait in Bruegel, which is the exact obverse of the sort of humaneness which made him great, is further shown in the series of *Virtues*, also of this period; although these occasionally exhibit a high degree of skill in handling complex groupings, they are what professionalized virtues are apt to be—tedious.

Midway in this prosperous and fertile time of development the Emperor Charles, taken with the notion of enjoying all the benefits of being dead while yet alive, partitioned the empire between his brother and his son, and himself retired in state to a monastery in Spain. From this haven, free of governmental responsibilities, he was able, through his dutiful son Philip, to instigate increasingly severe measures of religious and political repression for the people of the northern lowlands. Yet such things did not affect the personal liberty of Bruegel, who was maintaining an irregular establishment described

by Van Mander in the following anecdote: "As long as he lived in Antwerp, he kept house with a servant-girl, whom he might have married had it not misfortuned him that she was always telling lies, a thing repugnant to his love of truth. He made an agreement or contract with her that he should mark all her lies on a stick—and he took a pretty long one—and when the stick should be full of marks the marriage should be off; which then happened before much time had passed."

More important is what Van Mander tells us of a friendship: "He worked much for a merchant named Hans Frankert, an admirable and excellent man, who found pleasure in knowing Bruegel and was with him whole days at a time. With this man Frankert, Bruegel often went among the peasants, to fairs and marriages, both dressed like peasants; and they took presents like the others, just as if they belonged to the family or acquaintance of the bride or the bridegroom. Here Bruegel found his pleasure in observing the manners of the peasants in eating, drink-



HEAD OF AN OLD PEASANT WOMAN. 1564? MUNICH, ALTE PINAKOTHEK

ing, dancing, jumping, loving and other funmaking; which things he then very skilfully and carefully rendered again in colors, in water-color as well as in oil, in both which mediums he was extraordinarily talented." Then Van Mander proceeds to stress the faithfulness and accuracy of Bruegel's peasant pictures in the details of costumes and movements. In short, Bruegel had begun to paint.

The earliest dated painting, Twelve Flemish Proverbs, is interesting only because of its connection with Bruegel; its relative clumsiness of execution and utterly unpictorial conception as a whole render it very likely the first of his attempts in a new medium. However, this picture and the others that must be

grouped immediately with it mark the definite emergence of what was thenceforward to be his predominant interest—the life of the peasants, between whom and himself there existed the unbreakable bonds of a common origin and a common destiny. Thus he began at once to paint in accordance with the dictates of his essentially realistic genius, but the first works of capital importance still retain a large admixture of the fantastic spirit which had been running riot in his recent designs for the engravings. These two pictures are the Carnival and Lent and the Flemish Proverbs in Berlin, both of the year 1559; in both fantasy is made convincing through realistic treatment, just as the Van Eycks and Roger Van der Weyden had made convincing their religious idealism, Bruegel's difference from them

being simply a difference of subject-matter and a still greater reliance upon realistic skill for its own sake. In the Children's Games of the next year there occurs the first complete union on a great scale of realism in both matter and manner; and two years later, with the Fall of the Rebel Angels, a recurrence in greatly intensified form of the combination between fantastic idea and realistic treatment. This last painting, credited to Jerome Bosch himself until the discovery of Bruegel's signature, is infinitely superior in conception and execution to anything by the earlier man, and would alone rank its creator as a great painter; yet the greatness it confers upon its maker is not the kind that is most truly Bruegel's. Through

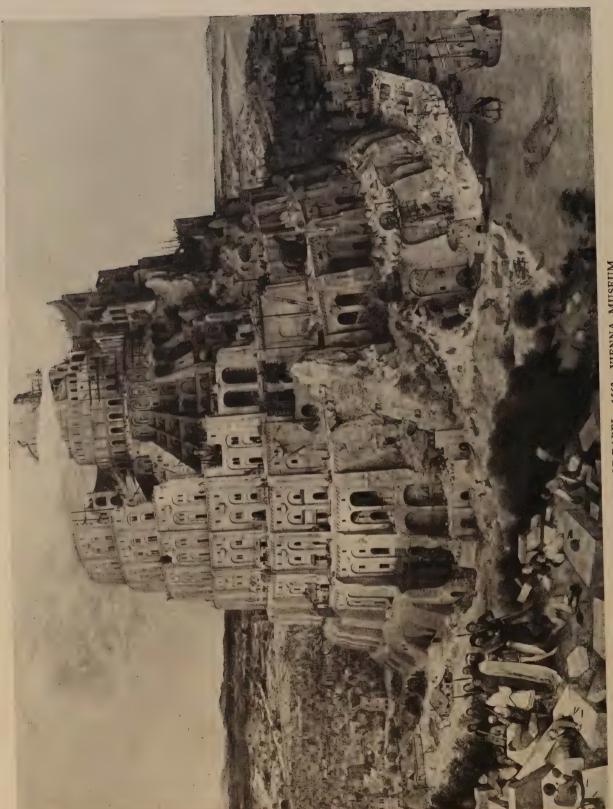


"DULLE GRIET." 1564. ANTWERP, VAN DEN BERGH COLLECTION

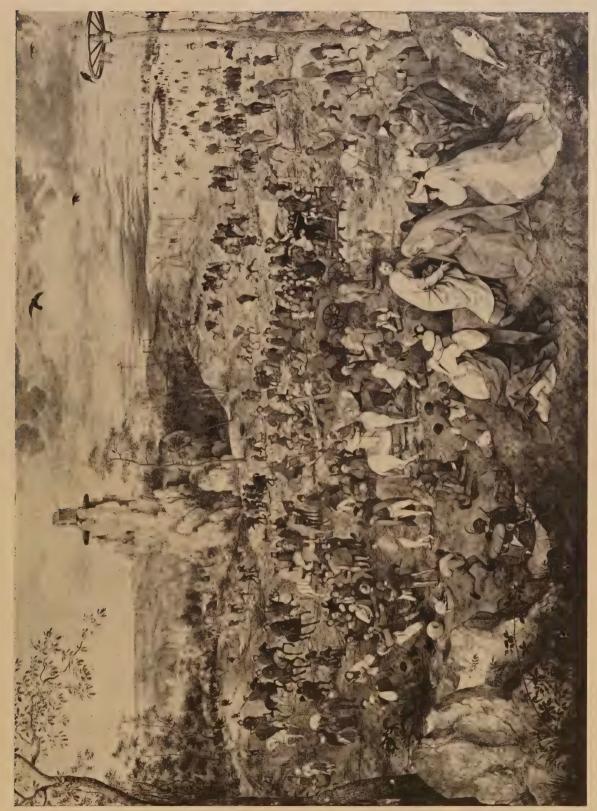
all these paintings of the Antwerp period there runs a rapidly increasing technical skill -in drawing, color and design-until the last picture that could possibly have been done before his removal to Brussels, the Israelites and Philistines, is for minute workmanship a world's wonder. On a small panel about thirteen by twenty-two inches Bruegel has put several hundred human beings, the largest of whom is less than two and onehalf inches, in a landscape setting of great beauty, all done in such detail that one can count the spots on the giraffes far away across the river—and all seen with so careful a regard for values and design that it is a satisfactory picture from whatever distance it is regarded, its details merging into the larger relations as one views it from further off. Craftsmanship of this type in painting can go no farther.

3.

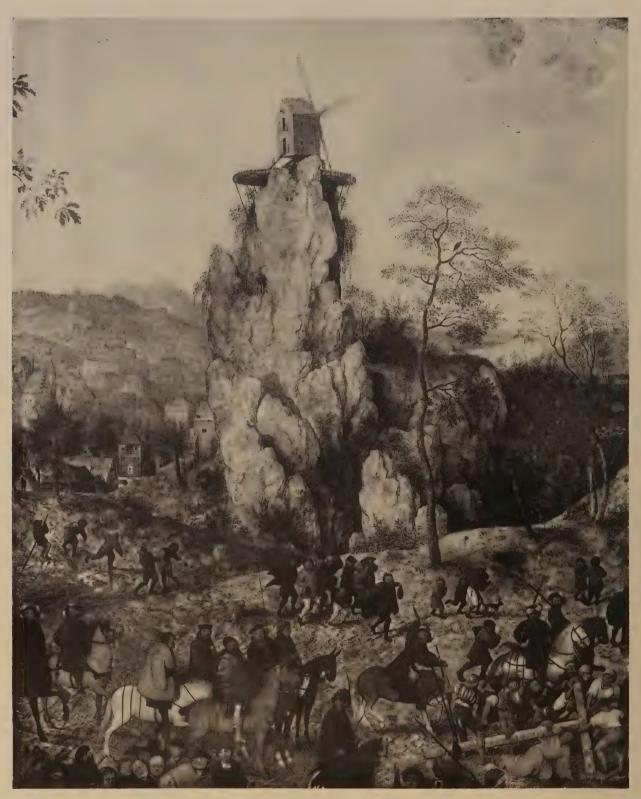
THE cause of his leaving Antwerp was his marriage, which took place in 1563. His choice had fallen upon the daughter of his first master, Pieter Coeck. Twice during his brief notice on Bruegel, Van Mander refers to the fact that "he had, while she was still small, often carried her in his arms." Her mother, after the father's death, had removed to Brussels and there successfully engaged in her own profession of miniature painting; in consenting to the marriage she "stipulated that Bruegel should leave Antwerp and settle down in Brussels, in order that he might efface former love-affairs from his eyes and his mind." In this marriage was the beginning of what has been well called the Bruegel dynasty. The two sons produced copies and variations of their father's paintings in such abundance that it is an excep-



THE TOWER OF BABEL. 1563. VIENNA, MUSEUM



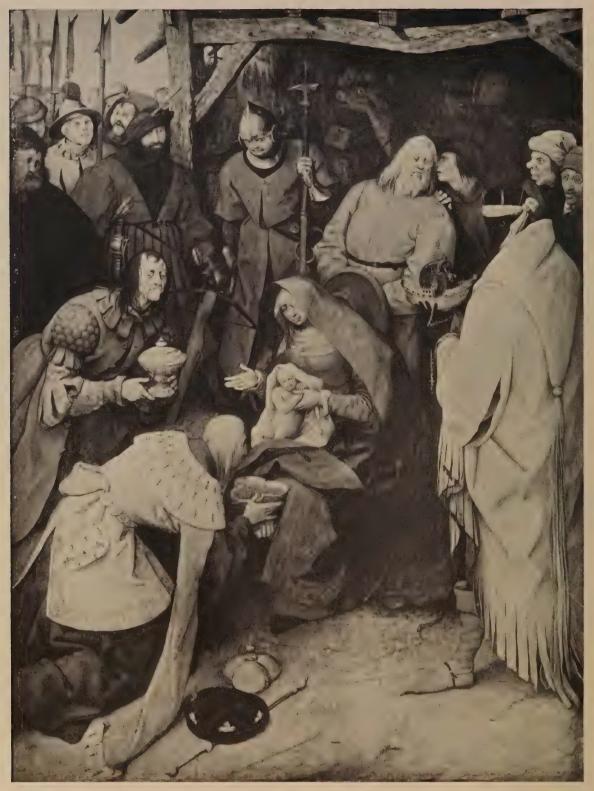
THE CARRYING OF THE CROSS. 1564. VIENNA, MUSEUM



THE CARRYING OF THE CROSS (DETAIL)



THE CARRYING OF THE CROSS (DETAIL)



THE ADORATION OF THE KINGS. 1564. LONDON, NATIONAL GALLERY

tional picture gallery in Europe which does not boast its "Breughel le Vieux"; and these sons in their turn fathered a dozen more painters.

But of them all, none approached the greatness of their original, whose six years of married life were filled by the creation of great series of five paintings, the Months.

While he was achieving all this ordered beauty of art, the disorders of the life around him were increasing at a fatally rapid pace. In Ghent a mob sacked the Abbey of Saint Peter and, made drunk by the wine of its cellars and the intoxication of destructiveness.



THE MISANTHROPE. 1565. NAPLES, NATIONAL MUSEUM

masterpieces—of realistic observation in the Wedding Feast and the Peasant Dance; of sheer imagination in the Dulle Griet and the Triumph of Death; of narrative power in the Massacre of the Innocents; of the purest pictorialism in the Conversion of Paul; of the indescribable Carrying of the Cross; of realism, imagination, emotion and thought merged into the large harmonies of that

ran smashingly at large through the city. In Antwerp another mob totally destroyed the rich and famous church of Notre Dame. Conflicts multiplied between Catholics and Protestants, between civilians and soldiers; bands of foreign mercenaries coursed through the country and open towns. The Duke of Alva's execution fires cast lurid lights upon the ruin and decimation of what had once

been the most prosperous region of Europe.

Of Bruegel's own reactions to all this his biographer, writing at a time when it was almost a well-forgotten nightmare, makes no mention. Van Mander's single sentence of direct characterization is this: "He was a very quiet and skilful man, who spoke little things he saw for himself are set down in such pictures as the *Massacre of the Innocents*, yet with such an all-sufficing objectiveness that it requires an effort of mind to realize that that very convincingness comes from his having felt the tragic reality he records. But it is impossible to escape from the over-

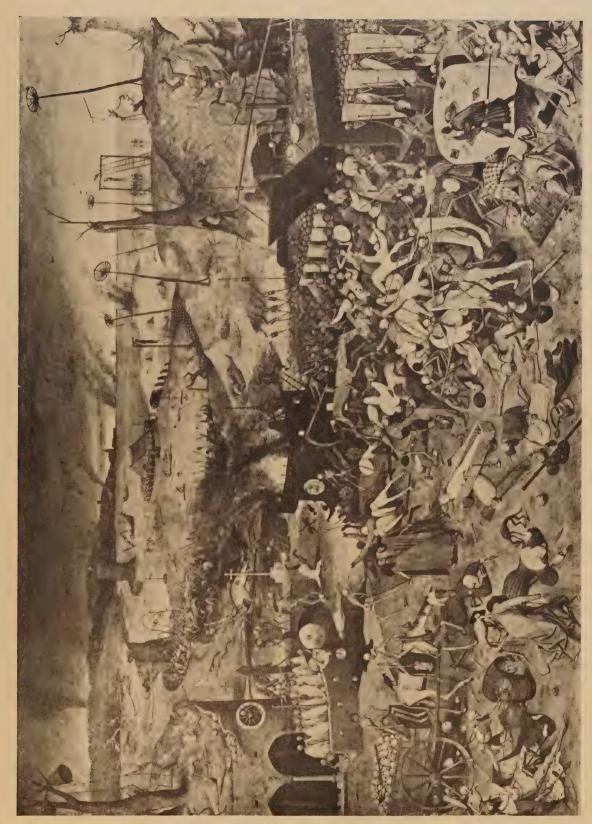


THE PROVERB OF THE BIRD-NESTER. 1564-65? VIENNA, MUSEUM

but was sociable in society, and loved to frighten his companions, often also his own pupils, with all kinds of goblin noises. . . ." This does little to round out the portrait of Bruegel the man, for once more the emphasis is thrown upon that droll and amusing side of his nature which seems to have appealed most to his own circle and thence been transmitted to Van Mander. But that Bruegel was intensely aware of the tragedies about him is evident enough in his works. The

whelmingly personal quality of the thoughts set forth in the hell-mouth horrors of the Dulle Griet and the apocalyptic terors of the Triumph of Death. Moreover, Van Mander writes that Bruegel had made many other "inventions" which were "so satirical and mordant that on his death-bed he ordered them burnt by his wife, either from repentance or from fear that his wife would get into trouble on account of them."

Not many months before this happened



THE TRIUMPH OF DEATH. 1565 OR 1566. MADRID, PRADO



THE TRIUMPH OF DEATH (DETAIL)

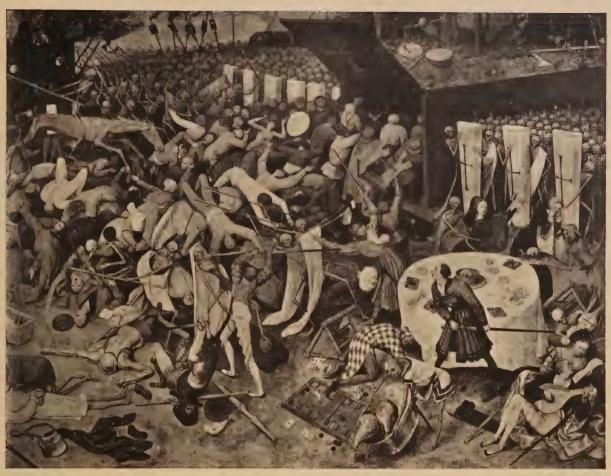
the people of the Low Countries commenced their final effort of revolt which was to establish their freedom not until eleven years later. Bruegel left a world that was hardly less black than the death into which he descended with open eyes. At that very moment Montaigne was setting about to depict one entire man with a vision as veracious as that of Bruegel: Cervantes was soon to rival in words Bruegel's power of making the fantastic real; and only forty years later Shakespeare was to accomplish a re-creation of human life that is more complete than Bruegel's simply because the medium of literature itself permits a more comprehensive embodiment of the soul of man than is possible to the medium of paint. And the painter who more than any other kept close to life belongs in the company of these three.

4

The subject-matter of Bruegel's great paintings is limited only by the world and life.\* The whole cycle of nature is in them—the seasons as they pass over mountain, plain and moving waters; the dazzling beauty of the southern sea, the northern cold. The entire range of human life is in them; somewhere in these multitudes every emotion finds its expressive gesture. Even all the animals that are intimately a part of human life are given in their degrees of individuality. These pictures seem to set before the eye every experience possible to man.

Always a tale is being told, but always it is story-telling of a very definite kind. It is

<sup>\*</sup> The succeeding remarks upon Bruegel's art and mind, disregarding both the minor and the debatable works, are based specifically upon the paintings which are characteristically great.



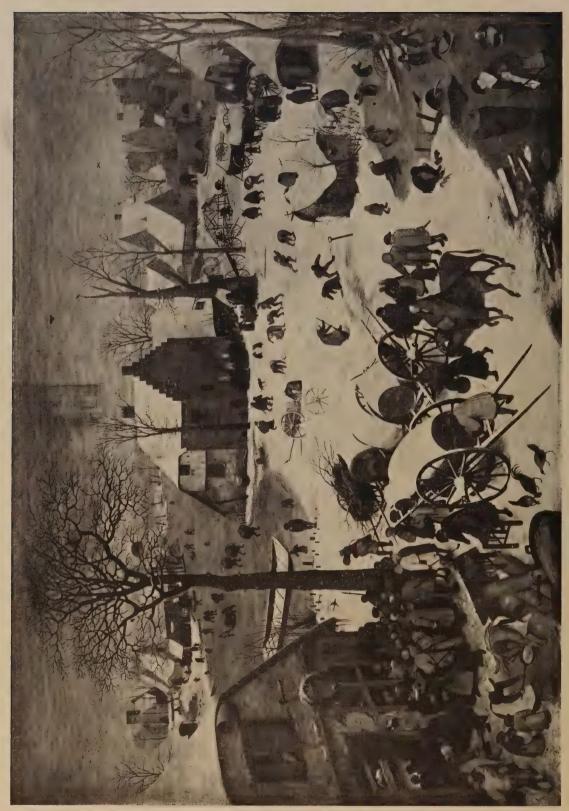
THE TRIUMPH OF DEATH (DETAIL)

never a continuous narrative with a plot involving the same characters in different circumstances. Thus Bruegel was never obliged to arrange successive episodes of the same story within one frame, as the older painters had done. All the things that happen in his paintings could happen—do happen—just as he shows them, at the same time and in just the relationship to each other that he depicts. He always observes time unity and pulls together his wealth of episode and byplay through unity of theme.

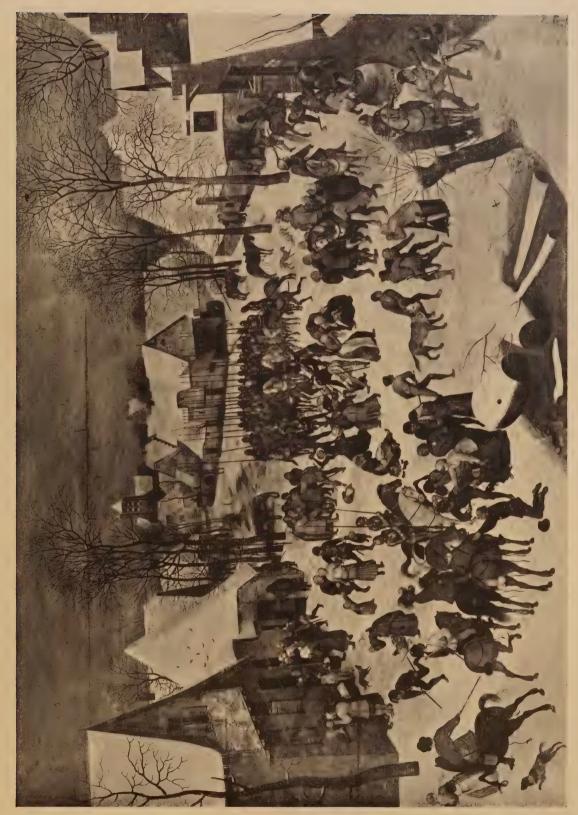
But on a given theme, at first, he attempted to say everything than can be said about it. The picture in Berlin illustrates seventy proverbs; the *Children's Games* is said to contain every one of the one hundred and fifty-four varieties of play listed by Rab-

elais as the games of Gargantua; the Tower of Babel has been called a builders' handbook; the Massacre of the Innocents apparently depicts every possible attitude of parental grief and frenzy. This exuberance of episode, this encyclopedic narrative utterance, had its literary counterpart in the book just mentioned; it was in full accord with the taste of the time, and Bruegel's personal aptitude had been fostered and disciplined by his long succession of drawings for the plates published by Cock. For the paintings of this type he has thought out every possible visual aspect of his story-matter and swept them all into a unity of design not less remarkable than his unity of theme.

The astounding thing to be noted just here is the completeness with which such an exces-



THE NUMBERING AT BETHLEHEM. 1566. BRUSSELS, MUSEUM



THE MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS. 1556? VIENNA, MUSEUM



THE MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS (DETAIL)

sive amount of anecdote is arranged into a functioning organism of narrative. In the Carrying of the Cross the movement of every one of the five hundred figures, the very expression of every face, is determined by a completely organized story-action. All the figures, even the minutest ones, play their parts in the whole design as such; but their momentary relations as human beings, equally complex, have been thought out and set down with equal thoroughness. Every episode is a bar, every gesture a note, in Bruegel's orchestrated narrative.

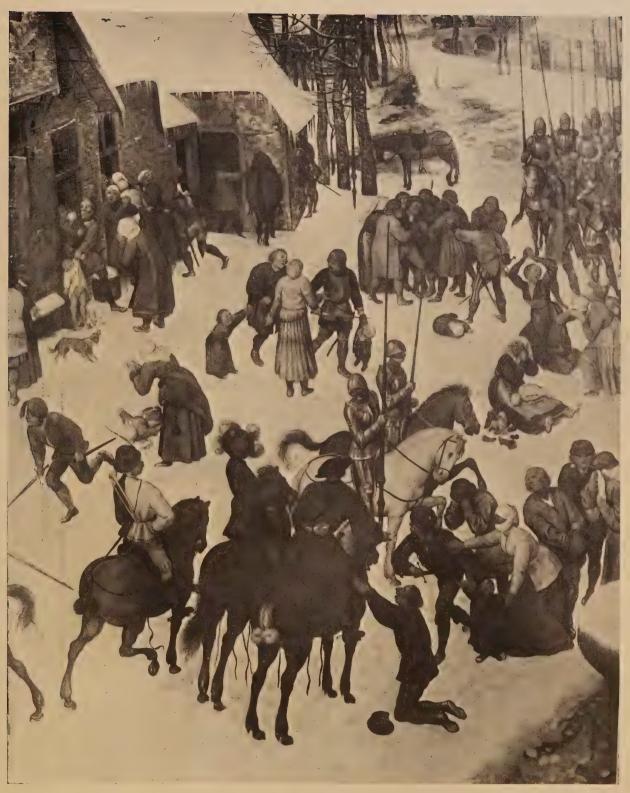
But other paintings show that Bruegel realized the fundamental weakness of this—the weakness of diversity of visual motive, distraction from the pictorial whole. He exhibited a tendency towards the elimination of all side-play, towards the reduction of subject-matter to a single motive and a reliance

upon emotional unity for the abiding impression. His picture-making is still story-telling in that something happens in terms of human action; but it is a single and casual event, and the main interest is shifted from events to design and color as the expression of mood. In the *Months* he forgot all about narrative complexity for its own sake, fixed his attention on the pure pictorial beauty of people and of nature, and sought only the emotional meaning of his theme.

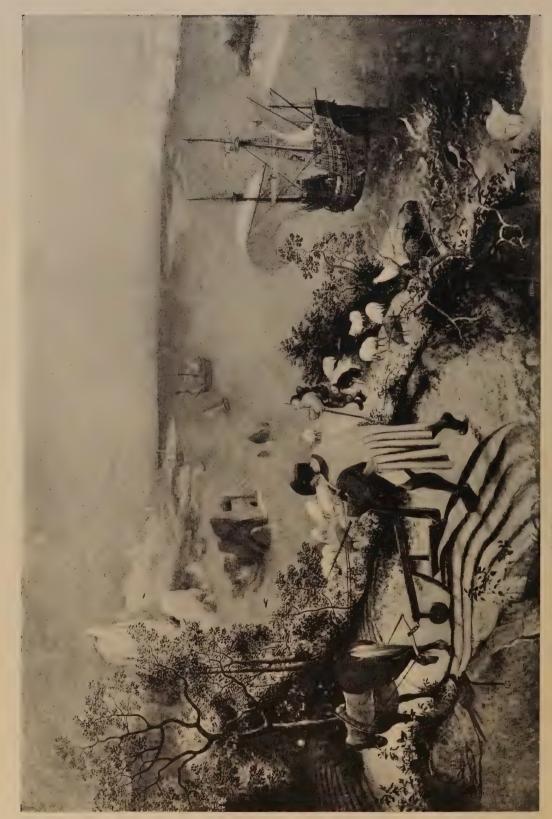
5.

THE nature of Bruegel's work previous to taking up painting is written at large and in detail over his early technical habits, but in these also can be traced a development corresponding to the change just noted in subject-matter.

In the earlier pictures color in general is



THE MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS (DETAIL)



THE FALL OF ICARUS. BRUSSELS, MUSEUM



THE CONVERSION OF SAINT PAUL. 1567. VIENNA, MUSEUM



THE WINE OF SAINT MARTIN (FRAGMENT). VIENNA, MUSEUM

conceived somewhat as the worker in mosaic is compelled by his material to conceive it—as a weaving-together of brilliant bits of pure color into a color design which is itself thought out independently of other technical qualities. There is harmony and richness, but there is not that melting tonality which afterwards came to be looked upon as the last word in painting. Above all else, there is an unbelievable brilliancy, especially where Bruegel made a lavish use of vermilion. The chain of soldiers woven through the multitude in the Carrying of the Cross is one of the most daring things to be found in painting; but

for general sumptuousness of color approaching to the fusion of later times there is, outside of the Months. no equal in Bruegel's work to the Conversion of Paul. And always it is color used for its own sake, with great sensuous delight. Yet always, again excepting the Months, it is color laid on to form which has already been conceived as drawing; the color, superb in itself, follows the form superbly; but the color and the drawing exist independently of one another.

At the beginning of his painting career it was his drawing especially which was determined by his work for the engravers. For the masculine style of engraving that prevailed in his day the preparatory drawings had to show absolute precision of outline. The edges of everything had to be clean and unmistakable in order that the engraver might know what was intended: the artist of the first instance had to make it impossible for the engraver

to mistake his meaning as to this contour or that shape. Drawing in this manner for years before he began to paint, Bruegel necessarily continued to do so afterwards. This accounts for the prevailingly silhouette character of his multitudes of tiny figures. Oftentimes, even from the beginning, the form that meets the eye within the shape is substantially filled out without being accompanied by the feeling of all-aroundness; but a full three-dimensional quality is more and more often attained until in the *Paul*, again, it fills the picture to a degree elsewhere unequalled in Bruegel's work.



THE PARABLE OF THE BLIND MEN. 1568. NAPLES, NATIONAL MUSEUM



THE LAND OF COCKAIGNE. 1567. BERLIN, VON KAUFFMANN COLLECTION

Marie of the Control of the Control



THE CRIPPLES. 1568. PARIS, LOUVRE

But another consequence of his early professional training—and a consequence which enabled him to accomplish some of his most amazing feats—was his skill in composition. His training in draftsmanship gave him the power to render exactly all details that contribute to individuality of character, and the simultaneous training in composition taught him how to arrange immense numbers of such individualized figures without loss of mass unity. Was it the Alpine mountain-sides or merely the upper window of a house on a village square that suggested to him the device of a slightly elevated viewpoint? It is this more than anything else that enables him to impose upon his multitudes that order of art by which may be expressed the disorder of life; and it is this that gives him his long perspectives of village

streets or far horizons dominated by oblique lines. These last, starkly visible at first and gradually becoming more broken and concealed, constitute the characteristic mark of Bruegel the designer.

But it is in design that there is to be discerned the least amount of technical advance on Bruegel's part; what he learned before he began to paint seems to have come nearer to sufficing him in design than in drawing or in color. His composition scheme in the set of the *Months* is shockingly, though intentionally, repetitious; in the hands of a less vigorous artist it must quickly have become the deadest recipe. He divides his panel into two practically equal parts by a bold diagonal from one upper corner to the opposite lower one; one of these parts he fills with things and people seen close at hand, and the other



THE MAGPIE ON THE GALLOWS. 1568. DARMSTADT, MUSEUM

with a far-spreading panorama. And he does it five times over with such freshness that doing it seven times more does not seem beyond his powers. But the design remains a pattern, conceived in the same way as the large composite landscapes done soon after his return from Rome.

In drawing and color, on the other hand, the *Months* show a marked departure from earlier habits in the direction of an essentially modern practice. In the drawing as such there is an increase in looseness with no loss of surety; tightness is sacrificed, but not precision. The figures are still silhouettes to a great extent, but there is an approach to the coalescence of color and drawing. In color by itself there is ever an opposition of large areas of some shade of brown and some shade of green, and a weaving of these areas

together by bits of each color in the other and of other colors in both. Though there is never the full impressionistic fusing of edges in atmosphere, there is yet a decided approximation to the vision of a genuinely naturalistic landscape painter, as distinguished from the vision of a draftsman or a miniaturist.

While this is true, and must be accounted to Bruegel as a merit, an evidence of mental and technical growth, it is still in a measure unfair to the never-failing largeness and unity of vision in the earlier work. Whether the other qualities of this work be regarded as merits or defects in themselves depends, of course, upon the technical tenets or preferences of him who makes the judgment. But in Bruegel they were neither merits nor defects; they were characteristics which had to



WEDDING FEAST. 1568? VIENNA, MUSEUM



WEDDING FEAST (DETAIL)

be present in his pictures if he painted at all. They were necessitated by the time in which he lived and by his professional practice previous to painting. They were as much a part of him as his fondness for telling stories; and in the fluctuations of taste stranger things have already happened than would be the return of even this latter element to professional as well as popular favor.

6.

In Bruegel's time story-telling in pictures generally was still one of the principal means of communicating ideas—even, perhaps mainly, ideas that were not inherently pictorial; prints were still the nearest things to books in popular circulation. Moreover, a nation living under the necessity of never speaking out openly on either politics or re-

ligion naturally resorted to symbol, the concrete proverb or the image that said one thing and meant another. The print of the big and little fish not only meant that the great oppressed the small but carried an idea beyond the words of the proverb in showing the big fish ripped up and disgorging; and upon a people so apt at interpreting images the significance of that would not be lost. This people could not only take a hearty enjoyment of the good things of life but they could also face the whole of it without shrinking from any part of it, whether of grossness or of terror. For the latter, indeed, they even had a gusto and the former they laughed away with a saving healthiness. The distinguishing mark of their living and their thinking was a robust realism.

In Pieter Bruegel there emerged from



PEASANT DANCE, 1568? VIENNA, MUSEUM



PEASANT DANCE (DETAIL)

among them a man of genius in complete sympathy with their realistic attitude towards life; knowing it from childhood, he gave it in his art a more complete expression than it had ever had before. The whole originality and fertility of his mind were for long expended upon feeding the popular taste not only for the familiar or exotic beauty of nature but also for a rough philosophy, unorganized but none the less genuine; and a habit so well established in him by years of labor would not vanish all at once even when more purely painter-like interests assumed for him a major importance. His predecessors in painting had been realistic in their measure; in them, however, realism was largely confined to details of execution and was more than counterbalanced by markedly idealistic conceptions. Even in the grotesqueries of Bosch the older disparity between idea and embodiment existed; the diabolism in them was only the obverse of the conventional religious idealism, and its distance from a true realism of content remained the same. When Bruegel came to painting, he both carried the manner of realism farther than his predecessors had done and informed that manner with its appropriately realistic matter, bringing about a new harmony between the body and the spirit of the art. He became the first complete realist in the history of painting.

The Fall of the Rebel Angels is the nearest thing to a rule-proving exception among Bruegel's great works, the single one which exhibits any of the older disparity between container and content; and this picture, great as it is, could vanish without impairing in the least Bruegel's essential greatness. To examine the Berlin Proverbs in detail is to



MARINE. VIENNA, MUSEUM

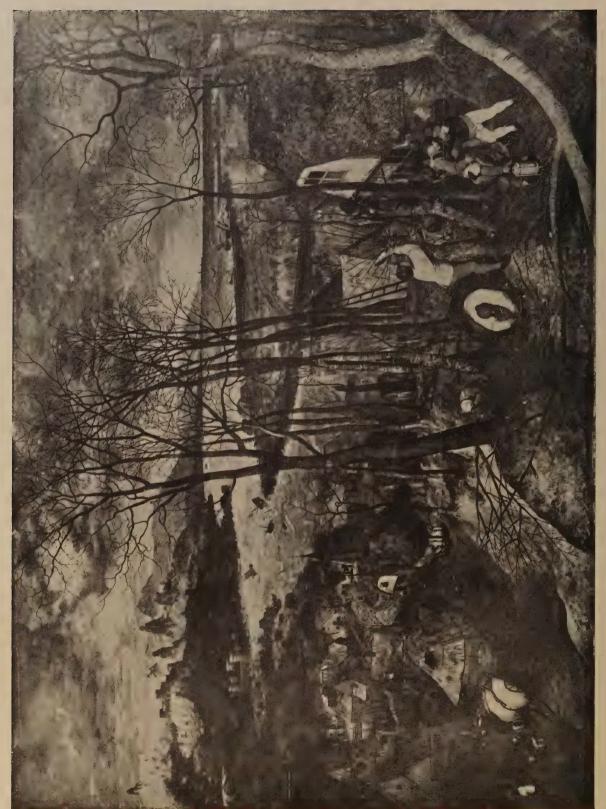


FLEEING SHEPHERD. 1569? PHILADELPHIA, JOHNSON COLLECTION

get a feeling of being among mad folks because so many of the sayings here illustrated turn upon outlandish actions; but as a picture it is a piece of masterly realistic sanity showing a whole village, in which some of the inhabitants happen to be crazy, intensely busy about its own affairs. The Triumph of Death, so far from being a piece of wild and gross fancy, is actually the lucid statement of an idea as true as any gesture in the picture; it is precisely the relentlessness of its realism in thought as well as in embodiment which frightens people into calling it untrue. The latter two paintings only show that if an artist is realist enough, if he penetrates sufficiently into the actual, he necessarily becomes imaginative; they only reiterate and strengthen Bruegel's right to be considered the supreme realist in painting.

Part of his realism is his refusal to depict

what he did not feel. Only once did he venture upon any of the religious emotionalism that had played so large a part in the work of his predecessors, and then he found the emotion so foreign to his own feelings that he openly borrowed the imagery of it; in relation to the great panoramic realism of the Carrying of the Cross, the group of mourning women remains a mere formalism, dissociated in spirit and in manner from all about it. Iesus himself is simply an unfortunate creature whose approaching execution is the pretext for this holiday. What passes for the conversion of Paul might be the delusion of a man knocked in the head on falling from a shying horse; there is about the event none of the conventional supernaturalism because for Bruegel that sort of thing was not The religious subject as such disappears from his work; and this, coming after



DARK DAY (JANUARY?). VIENNA, MUSEUM



DARK DAY (DETAIL)

the ecstatic idealisms of his predecessors, amounts to the expression of an idea concerning the significance—or lack of it—inherent in the churchly religion. He will have nothing to do with what is not human; not even nature enters into the great paintings except as a setting that enhances, by sympathy or contrast, the emotional life of human beings. To these, whom he knows and loves, Bruegel gives himself wholly, to share in their sorrows and their joys. His religion is that of the great humanists in all ages, and his faith is given only to life itself.

Part of his realism is the robust laughter which is the only solution for the fix in which human beings find themselves. It is the spirit that animated Rabelais in describing the birth of his hero and Shakespeare in creating Falstaff. To come closer home to Bruegel, perhaps, it is the spirit of Till Eulenspiegel, whose gross pleasanteries were probably relished by the painter along with the rest of his generation. Bruegel's passion for completeness in his realism abolishes privacy, and the state of affairs brought to pass by this slicing away of all walls is saved only by humor. Humor is the safety-valve for a spirit resolute to probe life to its last refuge—to probe life, but not to break through by main force, as attempted by later realists so-called.

Another element in Bruegel's realism is the objectivity of his work. Van Mander's anecdote already quoted shows that Bruegel went



HUNTERS IN THE SNOW (FEBRUARY?). VIENNA, MUSEUM

among the peasants, not as a professional artist in search of material, but as a participator in their life; and the great pictures themselves strikingly bear this out. This is not to say that Bruegel never worked directly from life, for there are many drawings which could not have been done otherwise a team of horses resting, soldiers standing in the way, old market-women squatting beside their wares. But when he came to paint the great pictures, Bruegel worked from a memory stocked with the gestures and actions of people who are unconscious of being watched. Bruegel's mind was centered upon their life and he was concerned with technic hardly bevond the point where it would enable him to crowd all their life into his given space and shape. His concentration upon the story he was telling, from the encyclopedic narrative of the early works to the simple and straightforward emotionalism of the Months, put him on the crest of a wave of energy which carried him through many an undertaking that would have been impossible for a more self-conscious man. We who see the pictures now are unconscious of the painter because he was himself lost in his subject; and because of this, also, we are unconscious of ourselves. "No glance ever strays across the footlights to the audience," wrote Meier-Graefe of Hogarth's scenes. In Bruegel's work there are no actors, no footlights and no audience. There is only life and participation in life by painter and by us.

And everywhere in these pictures it is the life of Bruegel's own time. His predecessors had clothed religious themes in contemporary dress, but the outer and the inner remained separate things; Breugel, retaining the outer, put into it its own proper content. He ousted religious stories by contemporary stories. These he painted so completely that a thorough sociological knowledge of the age might be founded upon or tested by his pictures. The whole life of the time is set down by a hand that never falsifies, that swerves neither to the right of idealization nor to the

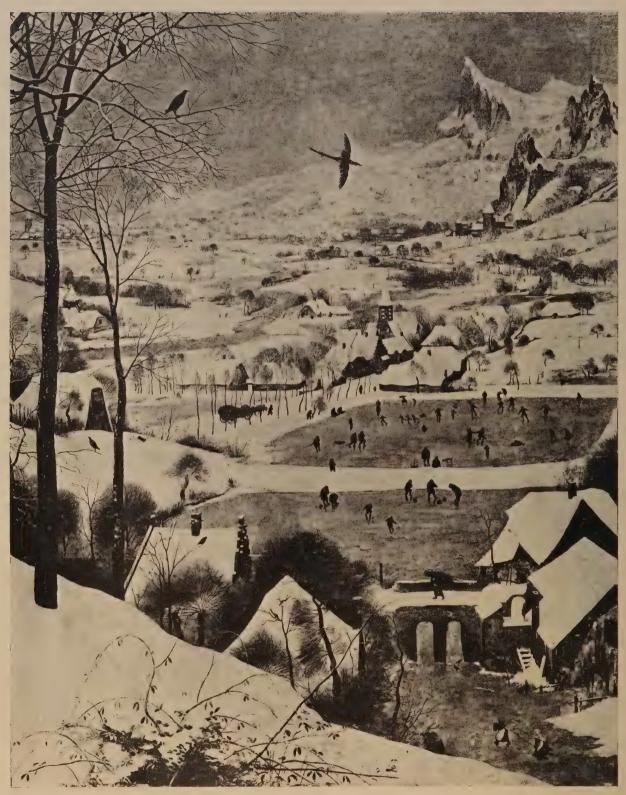
left of caricature.

Yet to leave him as a painter of contemporary manners only would be almost as false

to his greatness as to consider him only as Bruegel the Droll. For he penetrates below the temporary appearances of his time to the permanent in human nature. His pictures can be a means of access to the life of his age, to be sure; but no lover of them would think of using them in this fashion. The important thing is that they give access to a life that is of more than one age; under the costume of the time exists the same humanity that now wears another dress.

In giving himself over so unreservedly to the impermanent, Bruegel took what was for him the only way to the permanent. This cannot be captured by going out after a vague and unlocalized something called life in general; what is presented to the artist for his use is always life in particular. There is an all-life in the steady and swelling succession of human generations; but the only means of access to that is the now-life. The great artist's major accomplishment lies in revealing the universal through the particular, the permanent through the transitory, the inevitable through the accidental.

This Bruegel does; and how well he does it is to be found by analyzing the thought behind his varied rendering of events and people. Even in his early pictures each creature has his own individuality and yet is part of the crowd, which remains a crowd in spite of all detail; each individual retains his own value of personality and yet is integrated into a collective being. Bruegel's minute accuracy of drawing expresses his love for the individual as such; his great masses of people express his desire to see life largely and as an interwoven whole. Moreover, the device of making the ostensible subject of a picture an almost invisible incident in it is an expression of an idea as to the relative importance of the individual and what happens to him. Though the actions of the Carrying of the Cross and the Conversion of Paul do actually center around the subject-incident, the incident itself is reduced almost to the vanishingpoint; so that the story emphasis is thrown entirely upon the larger life of which the incident is only the temporary focus. Fall of Icarus likewise expresses this heresy



HUNTERS IN THE SNOW (DETAIL)



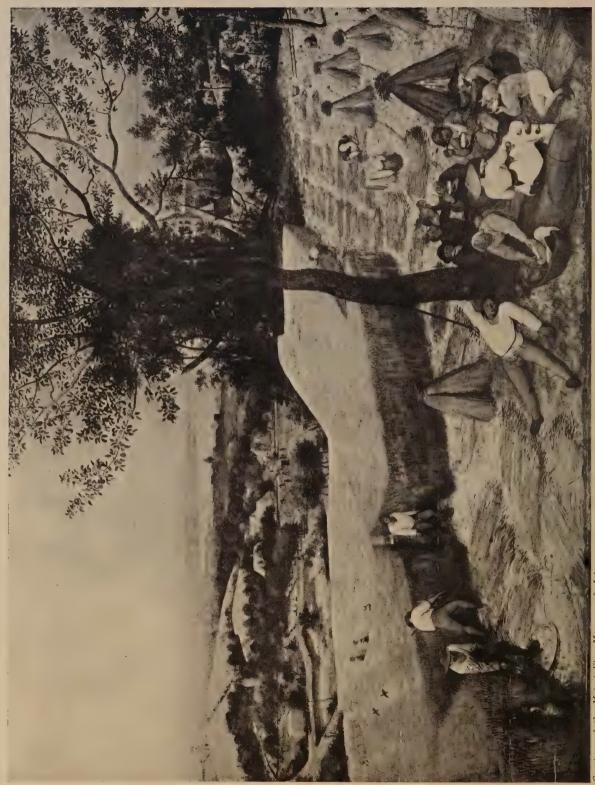
HAYMAKING (JUNE?). RAUDNITZ, COLLECTION OF PRINCE LOBKOWITZ

against conventional thinking as to what is truly sublime; only here the unimportance of a particular event is made more emphatic by such a detail as the position of the shepherd as well as by the large indifference of this great luminous calm expanse of land and sea and sky.

Moreover, the sequence of changes in the relative importance of the human figures in the paintings is but the story of Bruegel's developing conception of the relative importance of man in the scheme of things. In one group of pictures the individual, though fully personalized, is a part of the crowd and the crowd a mass of insects swarming over the landscape. In another group of large-figured peasant subjects man is all-important, filling the whole and shutting nature out. The former are amazing, and one can hardly get too much of them; the latter are interesting

and one likes them long. But for the final expression of his mind one must turn to the set of the *Months*; these five, with the addition of the *Paul* and the *Icarus*, form the summit of Bruegel's art. In them Bruegel reached the solution of the two problems of his life, the life of nature and the life of man; and the solution was the life of man in nature.

The Months sum up his life's endeavor both in the material he had all along been dealing with and in the conceptions between which all along he had been alternating. They are full of motives and incidents taken from his earlier works—the church he drew so often, children at their games, the great stretches of landscape that he loved. But all things are adjusted to one another in a new way; the people are seen neither too large nor too small, but in a perfect relationship to



Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

THE HARVESTERS (AUGUST?). NEW YORK, METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART



THE RETURN OF THE HERDS (NOVEMBER?). VIENNA, MUSEUM



Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art

THE HARVESTERS (DETAIL)

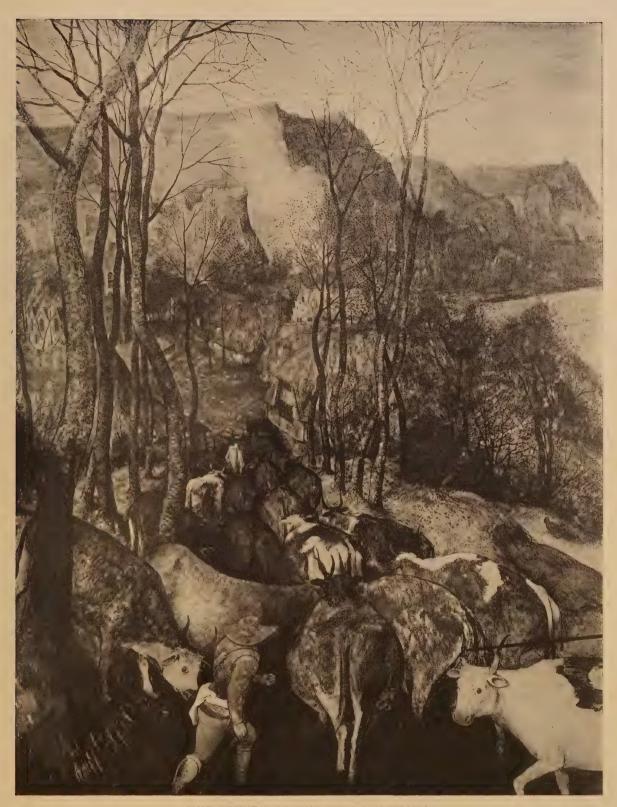
an immensely embracing nature; and each picture is pervaded by an unbroken harmony of mood. This set marks the attainment of final insight into everything that had concerned him; they constitute his acceptance and affirmation of life.

7.

THE more Bruegel's work is studied the stronger grows the feeling that almost everything may be attributed to him. To go to Vienna and through that group of fifteen pictures to come into direct contact with his mind across three hundred and fifty years is to be convinced that his is one of the inexhaustible minds of the world. The material brilliancy of the painting is more than matched by the brilliancy of the creative soul behind them. Whether he himself was conscious of all that can now be perceived in his work does not much matter; whether it came there with him aware or unaware, it is enough to make him superbly great. But this much is true: the more his mind is apprehended, the more vast and purposeful it appears.

He was fortunate in finding his means of expression in what was then a popular art; everything about that art was so alive that it drew to itself some of the greatest minds of the time. There existed a tremendous amount of give-and-take between the artist and his age, and this degree of interaction it was which had most to do with endowing both art and artist with vitality; they were fed from sources outside of and larger than themselves. Thus it was that Bruegel attained to so comprehensive an expression of himself and his age together that his work has become one of the permanent things of art.

Each picture is a completely functioning organism with several different aspects. There is the aspect of story-telling, that of technical picture-making and that of philosophic thought. Each aspect functions harmoniously with the others. Not only can one analyze out at will the elements proper to each aspect, but one can move from one to



THE RETURN OF THE HERDS (DETAIL)

another without any feeling of shifting gear or changing speed. (The one exception is the group of mourning women in the Carrying of the Cross.) All these aspects function at the same mental rate. They are all interwoven into powerful wholes. Every picture is a world in itself, and coming to know them is one of the completest experiences that can be found anywhere in the art of painting.

Yet even with this completeness of expression attained, one has before Bruegel's work a feeling of still more behind, an immensity of mind larger than any art can be. It is the feeling one has before Michel Angelo, but not before Raphael; before Shakespeare, but not before Marlowe. The greater ones are not only greater in their art, but they have

something left over in themselves which their art suggests but does not directly express. Of this greater company is Pieter Bruegel.

There are purer painters, but for the purity of their art they pay the price of going without something of importance to a complete life. And even their gain in intensity seems hardly a gain in the face of Bruegel's intensity on all the levels of his completeness. He transposes all life into his pictures in a scale of relative relationship that preserves the values of human life itself. Every other painter lacks something or has something in excess. Bruegel is the most comprehensive and the best balanced, the most energetic and the mellowest. Of all painters he is the greatest realist, and of them all the most humane.



THE RETURN OF THE HERDS (DETAIL)

### AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

THE object of the following book-list is to mention not everything that has been printed about Pieter Bruegel but only such volumes and articles as have definite value. The major cause of its shortness, however, is the fact that the literature of the subject is surprisingly small in quantity; in English, particularly, there is almost nothing beyond short paragraphs in some histories of art and the usual unilluminating brevities of general reference works.

PIETER BRUEGEL L'ANCIEN. Son Oeuvre et son Temps. Par René Van Bastelaer et Georges Hulin De Loo. Bruxelles: G. Van Oest & Cie.: 1907.

This, the first volume to be published on Bruegel, remains the standard work. For the handsomeness and completeness of its reproductions combined with the accuracy and thoroughness of its text, treating every aspect of the painter's life and work, it is a notable accomplishment in book-making and in scholarship. What has since been written and the pictures that have since been discovered still do no more than supplement certain phases of it; nor can it be superseded until someone is prepared to give time and money to a thorough search of European galleries and private collections. It is now, however, somewhat difficult to obtain.

LES ESTAMPES DE PETER BRUEGEL L'ANCIEN. Par René Van Bastelaer. Bruxelles: G. Van Oest & Cie.: 1908.

Within its chosen field this volume also remains the standard and needs only supplementing by later researches. Its 278 plates reproduce all the prints then thought to be by Bruegel or after his designs.

PIERRE BRUEGEL L'ANCIEN. Par CHARLES BERNARD. Bruxelles: G. Van Oest & Cie.: 1908.

This, which appeared immediately after the two preceding volumes, may fairly be described as a good popularization of them, with additional historical material drawn from other sources. The thirty reproductions are very good half-tones; the text gives a satisfactory account of the painter's life and times, although there is too much reliance upon the mere subject-matter of the pictures and although parts of Van Mander's clumsy narrative are transposed into French of debatable suavity. It is the only generally available biography in French. To any reader of it my indebtedness to it for facts (other than those given by Van Mander) and my

occasional difference of interpretation will be equally evident.

DER BAUERN-BRUEGEL. Von W. HAUSENSTEIN. München & Leipzig: R. Piper & Co.: 1910.

This is commended by Herr Friedländer (see eighth item) as a portrait of the man Bruegel; as a discussion of his work, however, it has been superseded in German by Herr Friedländer's own book.

"The Adoration of the Kings" by Pieter Brueghel the Elder. By C. J. Holmes. In The Burlington Magazine; vol xxxviii, no. ccxv: London: February 1921.

THE HARVESTERS BY PIETER BRUEGEL THE ELDER. By B[RYSON] B[URROUGHS]. In The Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art: vol. xvi, no. 5: New York: May 1921.

The fact that these two articles ostensibly deal each with a single picture should not obscure either their general interest or their significance as indications and instruments of the contemporary tendency to assign to Bruegel a higher rank than he has had heretofore.

Von Eyck bis Bruegel. Studien zur Geschichte der Niederländischen Malerei. Von Max J. Friedländer. Berlin: Julius Bard: 1921. (Of Bruegel: p. 169 to end).

The main point of interest about Bruegel in this book is that the author gives a catalogue of paintings which differs considerably, both in its omissions and in its additions, from that given by M. Hulin (see first item).

Pieter Bruegel. Von Max J. Friedländer. Berlin: Propyläen-Verlag: 1921.

This is the standard general work in German, and contains a trustworthy translation of the entire text of Van Mander concerning Bruegel. Even those who do not read German might well possess this book for the clearness and frequent brilliancy of its 101 half-tone reproductions, the majority of which are from drawings and prints. Herr Friedländer is the only continental scholar so far whose work takes cognizance of the picture now in the Metropolitan Museum.

Bruegel. Von Kurt Pfister. Leipzig: Insel-Verlag: 1921.

This short essay merits notice as a piece of writing. The 78 half-tone reproductions are not very

clear, but they include more than a dozen which are in neither Friedländer nor Bernard.

Pieter Bruegel. Vierzehn Faksimiledrucke nach Zeichnungen und Aquarellen. Mit einer Einleitung von Kurt Pfister. München: R. Piper & Co.: 1922.

This handsome series of large plates is a publication of the *Marées-Gesellschaft* and for faithfulness in facsimile reproduction is not to be surpassed.

PIETER BRUEGHEL'S "FALL OF ICARUS" IN THE BRUSSELS MUSEUM. By ARTHUR EDWIN BYE. In Art Studies: Mediæval Renaissance and Modern: No. 1. Princeton: University Press: 1923.

A sympathetic though not stylistically distinguished essay in appreciation, written around the Fall of Icarus in the Brussels Museum.

RENAISSANCE ART. By ELIE FAURE. New York: Harper & Brothers: 1923. (Of Bruegel: pp. 276-286).

This author's habitual saturation with his subjectmatter has enabled him to convey the multitudinous quality to be felt in many of Bruegel's pictures and also to adumbrate the humanity of soul behind them; but he has almost nothing to say about the more narrowly æsthetic merits which permit of Bruegel being ranked among the great; and even on the score of subject-matter Bruegel's livingness is almost smothered under a rhetoric made sluggish with anecdotal detail.

Breughel. By Aldous Huxley. In The Calendar of Modern Letters: vol. 1, no. 6: London: August 1925.

This essay is a little sermon on the virtue of comprehensiveness in the appreciation of art, with Bruegel as an ideal text. It is not itself a comprehensive presentation of the painter or his work and it has very few traces of the verbal brilliancy which has had so much to do with putting this author's novels in the best-selling class; but it may make the name of Bruegel known to many who are not in a position to penetrate his work on their own account. I note a curious slip in the transposition of titles between the Brussels Numbering at Bethlehem and the Vienna Massacre of the Innocents.

DIE ZEICHNUNGEN PIETER BRUEGELS. Von KARL TOLNAI. München: R. Piper & Co.: 1925.

This book has immediately taken rank as the

standard authority on the drawings; its 104 large half-tone plates reproduce every drawing listed in its catalogue.

PIETER BRUEGEL DER AELTERE. Siebenunddreissig Farbenlichtdrucke nach seinen Hauptwerken in Wien und eine Einführung in seine Kunst. Von MAX DVOŘÁK. Wien: Oesterreichischen Staatsdruckerei.

This wonderful production is just being completed; its magnificent plates embody the utmost resources of modern color-printing. An edition with the text translated into French is announced for the month of July, and another with a translation into English is expected during the year.

The foregoing annotations are based upon actual reading and examination of the books and articles mentioned. I think it well to append a few additional items which I have had no opportunity as yet to examine; my study of the volumes already listed, however, leads me to believe that they possess interest and importance. The words in italics at the end of each entry indicate its source among the books in the previous section.

PIERRE BRUEGHEL LE VIEUX. Par HENRI HYMANS. (Gazette des Beaux-Arts: Paris: 1890 et 1891.) Pfister: Bibliography.

Les Brueghel. Par Emile Michel. Paris: 1892. Van Bastelaer & Hulin, p. 294.

PIETER BRUEGHEL DER AELTERE UND SEIN KUNSTSCHAFFEN. Von ALEX L. ROMDAHL. (Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses, Bd. 25: Wien: 1905.) Tolnai and Pfister: Bibliographies.

PIETER BRUEGEL IM KUPFERSTICHKABINETT ZU BERLIN. Von LUDWIG BURCHARD. (Amtliche Berichte aus der Königliche Kunstsammlung in Berlin, Bd. 34: Berlin: 1912-13.) Tolnai: Bibliography.

DIE NIEDERLÄNDISCHE LANDSCHAFTSMALEREI VON PATINIR BIS BRUEGEL. Von LUDWIG VON BALDASS. (Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses, Bd. 34: Wien: 1918.) Tolnai: Bibliography.

DER BAUERN-BRUEGEL UND DAS DEUTSCHE SPRICHWORT. Von WILHELM FRAENGER. (München: 1923.) Tolnai: Bibliography.

#### NOTES

THE illustrations of Bruegel's paintings accompanying this article are confined to those accepted as authentic by M. Hulin in his catalogue (see Bibliography, first item), with certain additional ones discovered since its publication. Seventeen of the paintings are positively dated; the rest must be distributed through the eleven years of painting on other evidence. Wherever a date appears under an illustration, it is the one assigned by the authority just mentioned, with the exceptions noted. The only alteration in the chronological order, so far as that may be determined, has been the grouping of the Months at the end, to correspond with the text, in which they are treated as the summing-up of Bruegel's work as a painter. All the drawings reproduced are dated on the authority of Herr Tolnai (see Bibliography, fourteenth item). The following paragraphs give certain supplementary facts:

Village Marriage: Two copies by Pieter II are known. A comparison of this picture with them shows that the arm and hand of the man kneeling near the bottom of the stairway have been repainted "for reasons of decency"!

Dancing Peasant: This is doubtful. Herr Friedländer considers it a copy; M. Hulin leaves the matter undetermined, but reproduces it.

Descent of Christ into Limbo (drawing): Herr Tolnai says that the date and signature are apocryphal, but assigns it to no other year.

Flemish Proverbs: Not known to M. Hulin; date given on the authority of Herr Friedländer.

Battle Between the Israelites and the Philistines: also called The Death of Saul at the Battle of Gilboa. The uncertainty of this date turns upon whether an extra figure can or can not be discerned at the end of the Roman numerals.

Dulle Griet: The literal subject is the quarrelsome woman, Terrible Margaret, she who frightens the devil himself.

The Carrying of the Cross: Also called The Road to Calvary.

The Misanthrope: Also called The Perfidy of the World. The proverb lettered at the bottom is

Om dat de vverelt is soe ongetru Daer om gha ic in den ru.

The translation is: Since the world is so untrustworthy, I go in mourning.

The Proverb of the Bird-Nester: The proverb is

Dije den nest vveet dije vveeten: Dije rooft, dije heeten.

It may be translated: Who knows where the nest is has his knowledge; who rifles it has possession.

The Numbering at Bethlehem: Also called The Payment of Tithes.

The Fall of Icarus: Not catalogued by M. Hulin. Here put next to the Paul in order to follow the text, in which these two are joined with the Months as representing the height of Bruegel's achievement.

The Wine of Saint Martin: Admitted by M. Hulin, but with strong doubts; regarded as the fragment of a larger work; done originally in tempera and repainted in oil, perhaps in the seventeenth century.

The Magpie on the Gallows: This picture was bequeathed by Bruegel to his wife.

Marine: Not dated by M. Hulin. Placed here because it appears to be unfinished, and so possibly very late.

The Months: The months suggested in the titles given under the illustrations follow M. Hulin's catalogue. Herr Friedländer assigns that given as January to March, the February to December, the August (New York) to July, leaving the other two as given.

M. Hulin dates the whole set about 1567. The only trace among them of a date is on the picture in the Metropolitan Museum; on the strength of this Herr Friedländer assigns it positively to 1565, but Mr. Burroughs is inclined to agree with M. Hulin. In any case the violation of time order in placing this set last is not very great and the gain is considerable in giving a culminating impression of Bruegel's art.

2.

No paintings in Bruegel's manner are reproduced which are definitely or even probably by the sons. They are a multitude in themselves, and are mostly attributed to the father. They are to be met with everywhere, from London to Palermo, from Madrid to Petrograd. Herr Friedländer authenticates (without reproducing) one in Budapest and another in Csàkány. In Hampton Court Palace there is an extremely interesting smaller version of the Vienna Massacre of the Innocents in which eatables are substituted for most of the children, and a companion piece of coarser workmanship giving an entirely different picture of a massacre. In Vienna there are a dozen or more by the sons which throw

much light on the entire question of Bruegel's own pictures; the most interesting of these is in the Lichtenstein Collection and is in the manner of the Fleeing Shepherd in Philadelphia. The problems raised by all these pictures are many and complex, but the scope and intention of this essay did not permit of its touching upon such matters. However, there are all sorts of ways to spend life, and

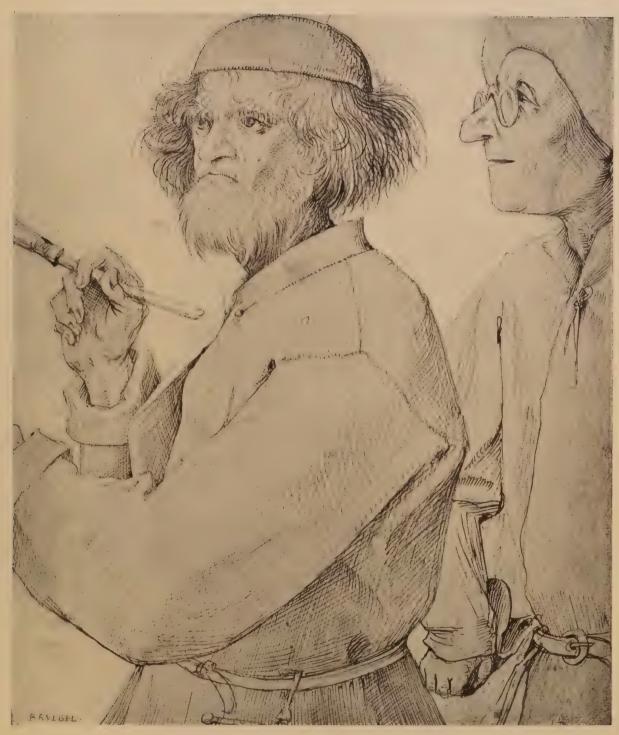
not the least interesting way would be to go a-Bruegeling through Europe.

Erratum: On page 33 the date of the *Massacre* of the *Innocents* should read 1566(?) instead of 1556(?).

The Land of Cockaigne, reproduced on page 39, is now in the Alte Pinakothek in Munich.



THE FALL OF ICARUS (DETAIL)



MASTER AND PUPIL (DRAWING). ABOUT 1560-61. VIENNA, ALBERTINA

# THE ARTS

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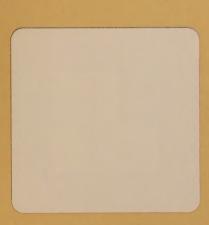
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